News Releases

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Health

QUEEN ELIZABETH HOSPITAL PROVIDES UPDATE ON VRE AND MRSA

CHARLOTTETOWN, PEI -- The Queen Elizabeth Hospital (QEH) is reporting two new cases of Vancomycin Resistant Enterococcus (VRE), bringing the total number of cases to eight. Only one patient with VRE remains at the QEH and that individual will be discharged shortly.

Stringent infection control measures are in place to prevent any further transmission. All individuals visiting the QEH, including those coming in for tests, x-rays or ambulatory procedures, will be required to take extra precautions when entering and leaving the hospital. Families coming to the QEH will also be required to take extra precautions when visiting loved ones. Everyone in the hospital must clean their hands before and after visiting a patient's room. It is also extremely important that the public thoroughly clean their hands upon entering and leaving the QEH. Alcohol hand rinse stations are available throughout the building for this purpose.

Visiting restrictions are being put in place at the QEH as an added control measure. These restrictions include:

- Immediate family only
- One visitor at a time per patient
- No children under the age of 12 permitted
- Children above the age of 12 must be accompanied by an adult.

In addition, five new cases of Methicillin Resistant Staph Aureus (MRSA) have been reported at the QEH in one of the medical units. The affected medical unit has been temporarily closed to admissions, and increased swabbing and testing is taking place in order to contain the bacteria. Two of these five patients with MRSA remain in the hospital.

MRSA and VRE are bacteria that have developed resistance to many commonly used antibiotics. These bacteria are most commonly spread by direct and indirect contact. Patients who test positive for MRSA and VRE can either be colonized or infected with the bacteria. Colonization occurs when the bacteria lives on one or more body sites with no signs and symptoms of illness. Infection occurs when the bacteria gets past a person's normal defences, and the individual becomes ill. Treatment for patients with these types of bacteria depends on whether the patient is colonized or infected and will occur in consultation with the patient's physician.

- 30 -

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